



REVIEWS

BOOKS

Reviewed by Ruth Parnell

THE TOXIC PLAYGROUND

by Jo Immig

Publisher: Total Environment Centre, Sydney, Australia, 2000

ISBN: 0-947360-16-6 (104pp tpb)

Price: AUD\$23.00 + \$3 p&h in NSW, \$5 other states, \$6 to NZ, \$10 elsewhere

Available: **Australia**—Total Environment Centre, 362 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, tel +61 (0)2 9299 5599, fax +61 (0)2 9299 4411,

website <http://tec.nccnsw.org.au/>

Environmental scientist Jo Immig, an anti-chemicals campaigner for the Sydney-based Total Environment Centre, wrote *The Toxic Playground* to alert us to the dangers children face at home, at school and at child-care centres from the toxic chemical load that causes "sick building syndrome" and a host of human health problems. Knowing how vulnerable children are to exposure, she is on a mission to promote risk-reducing strategies.

The huge increases in recent years in childhood asthma, multiple chemical sensitivity, chronic fatigue, so-called attention deficit disorder and food allergies/intolerances must be seriously viewed against the onslaught by environmental chemicals (many of which have endocrine-disrupting effects) as well as toxic food additives. Innig gives a brief overview of toxicology and highlights some of the most dangerous substances including lead, volatile organic compounds, formaldehyde, solvents and combustion products. She gives tips on identifying, auditing and removing the chemical pollutants that are

outgassed by carpet, furniture, panels, glue, dyes, paints, photocopiers, and many of the items which children use for playing and learning. She also stresses the importance of maintaining good indoor air quality and ventilation.

Innig also looks at chemical risk reduction policies and strategies in Australia and the United States. Her slim but invaluable book is an accessible read and presents case histories, checklists, safe alternatives as well as resources and references. This is essential information to act upon to help children grow up to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

GLOBAL SPIN: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism

by Sharon Beder

Publisher: Scribe, Australia, 2000, rev. ed.

ISBN: 0-908011-44-X (336pp tpb)

Price: AUD\$29.95; NZD\$44.95; £10.95

Available: **Australia**—Scribe Publications, tel (03) 9349 5955, e-mail scribe@bigpond.net.au; **NZ**—Addenda, tel (09) 834 5511; **UK**—Green Books, tel 01803 863260 (1997 edition only)

It should come as no surprise to NEXUS readers that corporations employ sophisticated techniques to persuade public opinion in favour of various agenda they wish to push. The environment is one area where their drive is particularly relentless. As Dr Sharon Beder explains in *Global Spin*, corporations utilise industry-funded scientists, specialist public relations companies, the media, conservative think-tanks and the legal system to win over the hearts and minds of politicians and the people.

When *Global Spin* was first published in 1997, it was ignored by the mainstream media, and it would be unfortunate if this

newly revised Australasian edition had a similar response. This one has three new chapters covering corporate-sponsored confusion on global warming, the "greenwashing" of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, and Greenpeace's adoption of a solutions-based approach with industry that is arguably at odds with its "green warrior" stance.

Dr Beder is an engineer and associate professor in science, technology and society at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Her analysis is an indictment of the way our environmental problems are managed in this PR mega-spin era. The lead-up to Sydney's once so-called "Green Games" is a classic example of how a major problem of a former toxic waste dump on the site can be stage-managed and the public duped into thinking the problem has been solved.

If you're concerned about the environment, read this book to be wiser to the tactics utilised to protect corporate vested interests.



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CELTIC MYSTERIES IN NEW ENGLAND

by Philip Imbrogno and Marianne Horrigan

Publisher: Llewellyn, USA, 2000
ISBN: 1-56718-357-3 (164pp tpb)
Price: AUD\$25.95; NZD\$35.95; £9.99;
USD\$12.95; CAD\$19.95

Available: **Australia**—Banyan Tree, tel (08) 8363 4244; **NZ**—Peaceful Living, tel (07) 571 8105; **UK**—Airlift Book Co., tel 020 8804 0400; **USA**—Llewellyn, tel 1-877 639 9753, www.llewellyn.com

Scattered through the woodlands of New York state and New England are hundreds of stone chambers. Constructed of hewn slabs of granite, quartz, limestone and shale, these rectangular, oval and circular chambers were built up at 20° angles on the sides, were supported by a massive slab on top with allowance for a doorway, and were covered with soil. Curiously, they don't all show the same weathering patterns, so it's likely they were built over a very long time.

Science teacher Philip Imbrogno and paranormal researcher Marianne Horrigan have spent much of the last two decades investigating these enigmatic chambers. In *Celtic Mysteries in New England*, they conclude that the chambers significantly pre-date colonial times and were used for astronomical, ritual and burial purposes. They determined with instruments that the chambers are sited in areas of strong magnetic anomaly. Because many of them are found alongside far older megalithic stone markers, the authors suggest that earlier peoples had

already tuned into the local landscape energies and even interdimensional portals. A diverse range of paranormal activity has also been recorded around these sites.

The authors have found evidence for several waves of chamber builders over millennia: the Phoenicians, from around 2500 BC, then Iberian Celtic mariners around 1200 BC, followed by Irish Druids and, later, Celts and Irish Christian monks from AD 500 and for centuries beyond. Their findings add another key piece towards unlocking the true history of ancient exploration.

THE TUTANKHAMUN PROPHECIES by Maurice Cotterell

Publisher: Headline, UK, 1999, 2000 (pb)

ISBN: 0-7472-6050-8 (356pp pb)

Price: AUD\$19.95; NZD\$29.95; £7.99

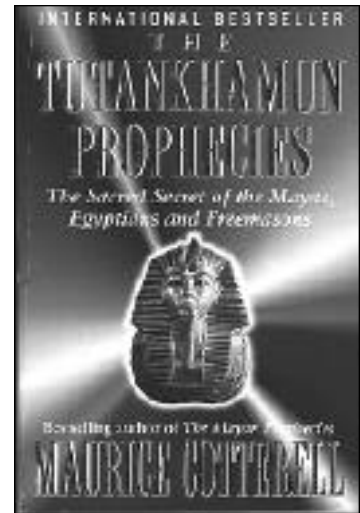
Available: **Australia**—Hodder Headline, tel (02) 8248 0800; **NZ**—Hodder Moa Beckett, tel (09) 478 1000; **UK**—Headline, tel 020 7873 6000, www.headline.co.uk

Following on from where he left off in *The Mayan Prophecies* and *The Supergods*, author/engineer/scientist Maurice Cotterell adds the 18th dynasty Egyptian boy-king to his reincarnating pantheon in his latest book, *The Tutankhamun Prophecies*. Having studied the artefacts, he believes that the Pharaoh Tutankhamun (1333–1323 BC) was one and the same as Lord Pacal, also a boy-king, who brought knowledge and wisdom to the people of Mexico over 1,250 years ago.

Both of them were known as the "feathered snake"—a symbolic representation of the Sun and its sunspot cycles including its "neutral warp", Cotterell explains. Both had encoded within their tombs, death masks and adornments this vital knowledge of the

Sun and its effects on fertility, as well as knowledge of the nature of light and the immortal soul. They both prophesied destruction, and the collapse of their dynasties coincided with sunspot minima.

Cotterell believes this ancient knowledge of sunspot cycles and soul reincarnation was not lost but protected by secret societies, including members of higher Freemasonic orders who coded aspects of it into the mediaeval cathedrals of Europe. Now, scientists are finding the keys to what the "gods" left for us to decode on how the Sun controls fertility and biorhythms, determines personality, causes cancers and affects the rise and fall of civilisations. Cotterell includes detailed appendices on all this and more in this richly illustrated volume. His findings are awesome and have serious implications for our future, the more we learn about the Sun's strange behaviour.





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ROSWELL 1947: "I WAS THERE"

by Robert J. Shirkey

Publisher: Movin' On Publishing, 2000
ISBN: 0-9671465-0-X (154pp tpb)

Price: USD\$15.95 + \$3.50 p&h in USA
(postage elsewhere, contact publisher)

Available: **USA**—Movin' On Publishing,
Inc., PO Box 2664, Roswell, NM 88202,
tel 1-877 482 7474, fax (505) 622 5278,
e-mail movinon@dfn.com, website
www.roswellincident.com

We haven't heard the end of the Roswell incident yet, for witnesses are still coming forward with their recollections of the July 1947 alleged UFO crash/retrieval event. One such account is from Robert Shirkey, who at the time was a First Lieutenant and Assistant Group Operations Officer of the 509th Bomb Group based at the Roswell Army Air Field, New Mexico.

Shirkey attests to seeing metallic fragments (including a small "I-beam") from the alleged crash site being carried through the Operations building at the air field—one of the carriers being Major Jesse Marcel—and loaded aboard a waiting B-29 aircraft bound for Fort Worth. This was on 8 July 1947; ten days later, he was transferred to The Philippines. Had he seen too much?

In his account, *Roswell 1947: "I Was There"*, Shirkey provides additional material from Frank Kaufmann, a longtime Roswell resident and former Army Air Force radar operator who'd seen an unexplained "blip" disappear on the radar screen during an electrical storm on the night of 3 July 1947. The craft and its occupants, Shirkey claims, were located and whisked away by the military

before sunrise the next morning.

Shirkey broke his silence in 1990 when, with fellow Roswell witness Walter Haut, he spoke out at a UFO conference, though he says he was never told to keep quiet about what he'd seen or heard that day. His written account—a memoir plus a record of stories from witnesses whose integrity he trusts—is a worthy addition to the lore.

THE OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE by Graham Dack

Publisher: Oobex, UK 1999

ISBN: 0-9534458-0-1 (296pp pb)

Price: £13.95 (includes postage and handling to anywhere on the planet)

Available: **UK**—Oobex Publishing, tel/fax
+44 (0)1788 891514, website
www.oobex.freemove.co.uk

There's no substitute for personal experience when acquiring knowledge and wisdom is concerned; so when it comes to out-of-body experiences, no one else can do it for you, but it helps if they can give a few pointers. Graham Dack does this admirably in *The Out-of-Body Experience*. He's a self-taught explorer of other dimensions, and here he explains in simple terms his unique understanding based on 25 years of studying sleep and dream processes and projections into etheric, astral and spiritual realms.

Providing background on himself and his discoveries first of all, Dack then explains the ins and outs of etheric, astral and spirit projection, the landscapes of dreams, and practical techniques for learning how to relax—a prerequisite before embarking on an out-of-body journey.

He covers the record-keeping process, questions relating to religion, morality and health, as well as some of the multifarious

encounters that can be had "out there".

Out-of-body projection has been a fundamental human activity for many thousands of years, and Dack maintains it can be practised and mastered by anyone with the will, discipline and patience to stick with it—though he concedes that some people seem to have greater ease than others in achieving this. He says that as you become more familiar with the technique, the subconscious mind adjusts to the idea that it is normal for the spirit-body to exist outside the physical body; indeed, both the soul and the conscious mind use the spirit-body as a vehicle and are not fixed in the physical. Such projection is often cloaked in dreams.

Dack portrays with humility and wonder this most exhilarating of human experiences. His user-friendly guide is a beacon for those on a journey of self-discovery.



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VACCINATION: The Right Choice?

by Maureen Hickman

Publisher: M. Hickman, Australia, 2000

ISBN: 0-646-38724-3 (246pp pb)

Price: from NEXUS, AUD\$28.00 includes postage within Australia; NZ p&h add AUD\$8.50; UK/Europe/USA p&h add AUD\$10.00

Available: **Australia**—NEXUS Magazine, tel (07) 5442 9280; or Maureen Hickman, PO Box 274, Ettalong Beach, NSW 2257, tel (02) 4342 5294, fax (02) 4342 5379, e-mail acii@ozemail.com.au

The question of whether or not to have one's child vaccinated is a dilemma for parents; but the more information they have, the more confident they can be in exercising their right to "informed consent". It is in this spirit of enquiry that Maureen Hickman has written *Vaccination: The Right Choice?*

Sydney-based Hickman has drawn on her 25 years of para-legal experience and her expertise in research for legal claims by vaccine-damaged individuals. Much of the data she presents relates to Australian cases and circumstances, but she also covers developments in the USA, UK and Europe.

Hickman addresses the confusion surrounding the withholding of child care payments to Australian parents who refuse to have their children vaccinated, and details consumer rights under the various applicable Acts in Australia, NSW in particular.

She looks at how the Australia Card we didn't want is in effect being revamped via the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, and chides the government for its

failure of duty in not establishing a system for reporting vaccine adverse effects. Most childhood vaccines, she says, are not put through proper clinical trials before being foisted on the defenceless, so the official line that "the benefits far outweigh the risks" is an untested myth until the benefits/risks can be accurately quantified.

With comprehensive information on the make-up and effects of vaccines as well as the vested interests in political, medical, pharmaceutical and media fields, Hickman's book is a great contribution to helping parents decide without feeling intimidated.

MAGICAL AND MYSTICAL SITES: Europe and the British Isles

by Elizabeth Pepper & John Wilcock

Publisher: Phanes Press, USA, 2000

ISBN: 0-933999-44-5 (300pp tpb)

Price: £13.99; USD\$16.95 + p&h

Available: **UK**—Airlift Book Co., tel 020 8804 0400; **USA**—Words Distributing Co., 1800 593-WORD; Phanes Press, tel (610) 456 5740, e-mail phanes@cris.com, website www.phanes.com

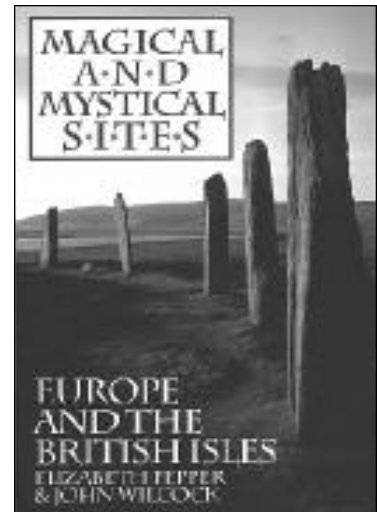
Most of us will never get to visit all the ancient, sacred places which are the foundation of Western occult traditions, but this book, *Magical and Mystical Sites*, is a suitable alternative for those who at least dream of undertaking such a quest.

Authors Elizabeth Pepper and John Wilcock take the reader on a magical mystery tour of Europe and Britain, starting in Ephesus, Turkey, then moving on to the Aegean islands and Greece, Malta, Italy, Spain and the Basque region, and then to France and southern Germany and over to the British Isles. They include a wealth of

historical, archaeological, religious and cultural data but contextualise it within the mythical, folkloric and occult background.

The authors identify two major themes to Western magical thinking—one shaped and energised by the Greeks in the first millennium BC; the other, a much more ancient tradition extant thousands of years earlier. They found evidence of the latter on Malta in the Hypogeum subterranean temple, and in Ireland in the legacy of the pre-Celtic Tuatha Dé Danann.

Taking in the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and the Oracle at Delphi; the cave art of Altamira and the menhirs of Brittany; Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England, and the raths of Ireland...this travelogue of sacred places, where the natural world meets the supernatural, conveys the message that Western heritage is far more esoteric than we generally acknowledge.





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THE LIVING ENERGY UNIVERSE

by Gary Schwartz, PhD, and Linda Russek, PhD

Publisher: Hampton Roads, USA, 1999
ISBN: 1-57174-170-4 (288pp hc)
Price: AUD\$47.95; NZD\$62.95; £16.99; USD\$21.95

Available: **Aust**—Gemcraft, tel (03) 9888 0111; **NZ**—Peaceful Living, tel (07) 571 8105; **UK**—Airlift Book Co., tel 020 8804 0400; **USA**—Hampton Roads Publishing Co., tel (804) 296 2772, fax (804) 296 5096, website www.hrpub.com

In *The Living Energy Universe*, Gary Schwartz and Linda Russek attempt to unify science and spirituality via their systemic memory hypothesis. Central to their model is the notion that all systems, from the most microscopic to the universal, are eternal, alive and evolving and, as such, have eternal, living, evolving memories.

Dr Schwartz, a professor of medicine, neurology and psychiatry but with a focus on integrative and bioenergetic medicine, set upon the idea in the early 1980s when studying systems theory. But it wasn't until 1993 that he and Dr Russek, also a medical professor involved in energy medicine, began to develop the hypothesis—and in response to a question about life after death.

The authors argue that the systemic memory process is facilitated by "recurrent feedback interactions" that occur between neurons and neural networks, within all cells and molecules. The idea of tapping into this "universal living memory" is not new; for instance, ancient Sanskrit teachings describe

the "Akashic records" and how to access them. Thankfully, the authors do acknowledge their debt to the ancients, and give due credit to more recent scientists/philosophers including Ken Wilber, Gary Zukav, Rupert Sheldrake, Stuart Hameroff as well as Bevan Reid—whose 1987 experiment on information transfer between crystals in Petri dishes they have replicated (their summary is in the appendices). Their simple, logical, elegant model, if accurate, has enormous implications for...everything.

CYBERCULTURE COUNTER-CONSPIRACY: A *Steamshovel* Web Reader - Volumes 1 & 2

edited by Kenn Thomas

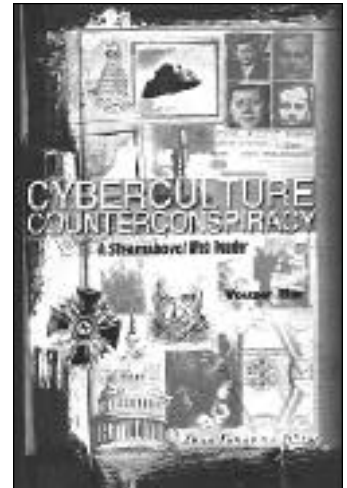
Publisher: The Book Tree, USA, 1999
ISBN: 1-58509-125-1 (177pp tpb), 1-58509-126-X (125pp tpb)
Price: £10.95 each + p&h; USD\$13.95 each + p&h

Available: **UK**—Counter Productions, tel 020 7274 9009; **USA**—The Book Tree, PO Box 724, Escondido, CA 92033, website www.thebooktree.com

Sooner or later, all good websites reach information overload; so when it came time for Kenn Thomas, publisher of the US conspiracy journal *Steamshovel Press*, to remove much of his website's material that had built up over the recent years, he had it collated and published in two book volumes (or, a laser imprint for the digitally inclined) as *Cyberculture Counterconspiracy*. Using this title, he pays tribute to Dr Timothy Leary, "the true champion of the cyberculture", and a host of mostly US-based conspiracy researchers and counterculture commentators, past and present.

The first book includes postings from the Latest Word column, with short features from *Steamshovel* contributors like Len Bracken, Adam Gorightly and the late Jim Keith; insightful interviews with Thomas himself, deceased activist/anarchist Kerry Thornley as well as JFK; and missives from fellow conspiracy journalists from *Paranoia!*, *The Excluded Middle* and the UK-based journal *Lobster*. The second volume contains reviews, news and posted links from the site's Offline Illumination and Things Are Gonna Slide columns. (But if only these volumes had contents or index pages to ease the navigation task...)

The material is mainly US-centric and ranges from the bizarre to the intriguingly interconnected, covering subjects/names as diverse as the occult, CIA mind control, the Manson family, UFOs, Reich, Castaneda, the globalisation agenda and the OKC bombing. Heady stuff for conspiracy buffs.



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THE PEOPLE BEFORE (THE SECRET LAND Trilogy, Vol. 1) by Gary J. Cook and Thomas J. Brown

Publisher: StonePrint Press, NZ, 1999
ISBN: 0-9582040-0-4 (225pp tpb)
Price: NZD\$29.90; Australian orders,
add NZD\$8.00 p&h, elsewhere add
NZD\$15.00 p&h

Available: **New Zealand**—StonePrint
Press, Post Box 55-037, Castle Hill Village,
Christchurch 8020, tel +64 (0)3 318 7377,
fax +64 (0)3 318 7311, e-mail info@
stoneprint.co.nz, www.stoneprint.co.nz

The prehistory of New Zealand is far richer than the mainstream version of events concedes. The Polynesian Maori *iwi* (tribe) may have arrived after AD 1200, but it's believed that an earlier group arrived a thousand years earlier, only to find the land already populated with tall, light-skinned, fair-haired people, a darker people of smaller stature, and even vestiges of giants.



For *The People Before*, writer/historian/explorer Gary Cook and researcher Tom Brown, former editor of the *Borderlands* journal, have compiled this dynamic first book in a trilogy titled "The Secret Land", on New Zealand's hidden, alternative history. Both of them contribute an introductory chapter which must also serve as their final words, for in the end readers are left to mull over the facts and draw their own conclusions about the origins of *tangata whenua*, the earlier occupants of the islands. Many of these ancient artifacts, which include canals, pits, mounds and stone carvings, have been deemed "anomalous", their origins not part of Maori stories covering the last thousand or 1,800 years.

Cook and Brown present recent scientific findings as well as diverse archival accounts and illustrations from late 19th/early 20th century anthropological and archaeological sources which have been conveniently brushed aside over ensuing years. Among the evidence is that the Maori knew that New Zealand's flightless bird, the moa, was extinct before the first wave of their ancestors arrived, and that a much earlier people with links to Central and South America, Australia and the entire Pacific Ocean region occupied the land in ages past.

The authors treat their subject matter with sensitivity, but their controversial findings still leave many questions unanswered.

THE PURE STATE OF NATURE by David Horton

Publisher: Allen & Unwin, Aust, 2000
ISBN: 1-86508-107-8 (192pp tpb)
Price: AUD\$19.95; NZD\$27.95

Available: **Australia**—Allen & Unwin, tel +61 (0)2 8425 0100, e-mail frontdesk@allen-unwin.com.au; **NZ**—Archetype Book Agents, tel (09) 377 3800

In *The Pure State of Nature* Dr David Horton, scientist, archaeologist, farmer and editor of *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, launches an attack on the misconceptions of white Australian academia and culture over the last two centuries and presents a passionate argument for a different way of looking at Australia's prehistory.

Dr Horton takes exception to a view expounded by Dr Tim Flannery in *The Future Eaters*, that Aborigines used fire to the detriment of the environment and that they were responsible for the demise of the land's megafauna. He argues that their use of fire caused no more damage than a typical bushfire (which, he concedes, can be very destructive) and that large-scale use was not in the interests of their survival.

On the second point, Horton asks how the Aborigines, who have occupied Australia for 50,000 years (at least), could have killed off the megafauna when they co-existed for 25,000 years before the extinction. The "kill sites" proposed by some archaeologists are non-existent. The culprit, he maintains, was climate change. The megafauna, having adapted to climatic variations in preceding ages (like the other species, humans included) were cut off from adequate water supplies (as other species were not, due to better adaptations) when the lush interior was beset by an extended dry spell which caused desertification of key ecosystems.

With his personal, provocative approach, Dr Horton gives insights into the Aboriginal view of nature, and laments that the rampant ecological havoc inflicted on Australia these past 210 years has already caused disaster.



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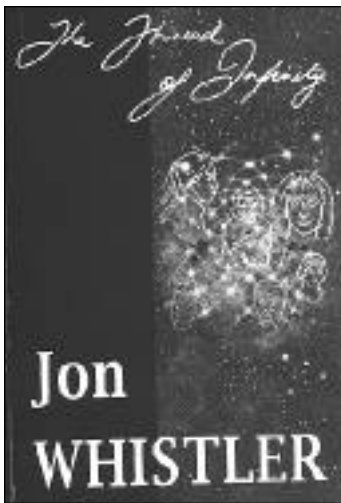
BOOKS

THE THREAD OF INFINITY

by Jon Whistler

Publisher: Light Pulsations, Aust, 2000
ISBN: 0-9585489-8-6 (664pp tpb)
Price: AUD\$35.00 in Aust; AUD\$40.00 to NZ; US\$30.00 elsewhere (prices incl p&h)
Available: **Australia**—NEXUS Magazine, tel (07) 5442 9280; or Light Pulsations, PO Box 1447, Launceston, Tasmania 7250, tel +61 (0)3 6334 5195, fax +61 (0)3 6328 1539, website www.ionitherapylife.com
(Reviewed by Duncan Roads)

It is not often that I get so drawn into one of the books on our eternal "reviews pile". I initially picked up this book to make an "executive decision" as to whether I would include the title for review in NEXUS, and ended up not being able to put the darn thing down! My concern was that the book was "visionary fiction" (a category I generally avoid including in NEXUS), and indeed, to this moment, I am still undecided as to whether I believe it to be literally true or not.



The tale starts in an ancient civilisation which is known to its inhabitants as "Lemu". The characters reappear in various guises and lifetimes at key points in the Earth's history: in Atlantis; Rome in the time of Julius Caesar; Judea in the time of Jesus Christ; an ancient American "Indian" civilisation; the time of Arthur and Merlin in ancient Britain; pre-World War II Nazi Germany; and on into the super-secret world of the Illuminati and the upper echelons of the global intelligence community.

It is the story of those who feed on the energy of fear so they can maintain their energy source. It is the story of those struggling to break through the boundaries of a deliberately created space-time illusion (plus

its attendant ego) and awaken to the energies of their God within—unconditional love.

This book is so well written, I had to pinch myself so I'd remember where I was each time I put it down. You, as the reader, are there, living each life, experiencing their feelings. It has so many echoes of historical accuracy that you will be left in eternal wonder as to where the information came from. I just cannot praise it highly enough!

THE GRAND DESIGN, Volumes 1 & 2 by Paddy McMahon

Publisher: Hampton Roads, USA, 2000
ISBN: 1-57174-154-2 (vol 1 200pp tpb); 1-57174-155-0 (vol2 226pp tpb)
Price: AUD\$29.95 each; NZD\$38.95 each; £n/a; USD\$13.95 each
Available: **Aust**—Gemcraft, tel (03) 9888 0111; **NZ**—Peaceful Living, tel (07) 571 8105; **UK**—Airlift Book Co., tel 020 8804 0400; **USA**—Hampton Roads Publishing Co., tel (804) 296 2772, www.hrpub.com

As a child, Irishman Paddy McMahon was fascinated by fairies and angels, yet fearful of the hell, devil and evil spirits of his Catholic upbringing. Much later, at the age of 44, he began to see and hear spirit guides, and three years on, in 1981, had his first conscious communication with one whom he named "Shebaka". Fifteen years later, he learned that this highly evolved spiritual entity was once the Egyptian Pharaoh Shabaka (712–698 BC), who preserved an ancient scroll bearing Ptah's creation story in a stone carving—now held at the British Museum in London.

The Grand Design is a two-volume collection of Shebaka's higher-soul wisdom, channelled for the purpose of relaying insights to help individuals achieve their true spiritual potential. McMahon's original self-published edition was very well received, and it's easy to see why it gelled with so many people. Shebaka's messages have the clarity and authority of a being who has progressed through various stages of evolutionary development, and they ring true to those who are on a path of spiritual enquiry.

Volume 1 shares Shebaka's insights on God and the Grand Design, awareness and consciousness, the seven stages of evolutionary growth, time and space, group reincarnation, prophecy and even euthanasia and suicide. Volume 2 delves further into how the Grand Design translates into the reality of human experience; it considers unconditional love, sin and karma, imagination and meditation, soul mates and relationships, ETs and the Akashic records, as well as sex, politics, money and much more.

This is down-to-Earth wisdom, coming from a non-judgmental, loving space.

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CONSPIRANOIA! The Mother of All Conspiracy Theories

by Devon Jackson

Publisher: Plume/Penguin, USA, 2000

ISBN: 0-452-28128-8 (200pp tpb)

Price: USD\$13.95; CAD\$19.99

Available: **USA**—Plume Paperbacks/
Penguin Putnam Inc., tel +1 (212) 366
2222, fax +1 (212) 366 2262

For those who like their conspiracy theories with a dose of humour, this book, *Conspiranoia!*, will make you smirk and grimace at the same time. It's also the ideal book to brush up with so you can amaze your friends at conspiracy quiz nights.

Author Devon Jackson, a freelance journalist whose work has been published in *The Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair* and *New York Times*, has been exploring the vast conspiracy territory for over a decade. He has a special mix of wit and irony in his reporting, lifting the reader out of despairing too much over who "They" really are.

In describing the territory of 20 major conspiracy theories, Jackson starts out with "maps"—appealingly hand-drawn diagrams showing links between the main themes and players. The text begins with his analysis of the "Master Plan", which includes God, Satan, the Illuminati, Freemasons and Nazis as well as the NWO, CIA, FBI, LSD, CFR, TNCs, ETs, the Aquarian Conspiracy and many other lesser-known groupings. He then focuses on sub-conspiracies, with catchy chapter names like Dark Knights, Freemalluminati, Zionist Anti-Zionist, Ameryan, Reactioneers and Schizodelic.

The entries in each category are brief but pithy, and they're compiled with photos and

quotes in a nicely anarchic layout. Chapters are not numbered, but symbolised; the same icons are used in the text where appropriate to aid cross-referencing (though this takes some getting used to).

Jackson sums it up when he describes "conspiranoia" as the grey area between what you *know* is true and what you *feel* is true. A book I wish I'd written myself!

VIDEO

Reviewed by Duncan Roads

UFO DOWN-UNDER

Produced by Barry Taylor, Australia, 2000 (PAL/VHS or NTSC/VHS, 50mins)

Price: AUD\$40.00 inc. p&h in Australia; AUD\$47.00 elsewhere

Available: **Australia**—Barry Taylor, PO Box 679, Grafton, NSW 2460, e-mail stingray@nor.com.au, website www.nor.com.au/users/stingray/

The area of Grafton in the northeastern corner of New South Wales, Australia, has long been considered a "hot spot" for unusual and unexplained phenomena. Whilst many researchers are aware of the many reported UFO sightings, as evidenced by scores of local newspaper reports over the years, not so many people are aware that the hills behind Grafton have more than their fair share of sightings of strange creatures, including 30-foot-long lizards and, of course, the elusive yowie.

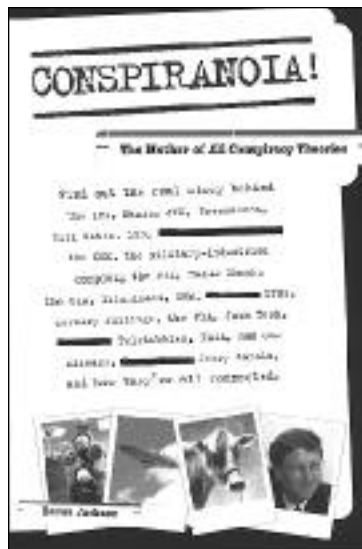
Barry Taylor is to be congratulated for this fine-quality production. Good visuals and soundtrack as well as clear narration add up to make a very watchable video.

Features on the video include:

- The "Jellyfish" UFO—an eight-minute daytime sighting of a most unusual object that had an appendage dangling from underneath. The object appeared to be "swimming" because of its unusual movement, and using this "tail" to propel itself. As the object gets further away, you can clearly see it pulsing. Zoomed close-ups of the object show the "tail" action.

- "Cluster" UFOs—the footage of this 50-minute daytime sighting is considered by many to be the best ever taken of these. Five different "clusters" are featured, with zooms showing their unusual action of rolling around one another. The sighting includes orange and blue spectrum UFOs. When these objects fly in front of cloud, you can see their upright cylinder shape; these are also zoomed so you get a better look.

Other highlights include still images of the UFO flap of April 1998; low, slow-flying UFOs over Grafton at night; and a "triangle formation" of UFOs just west of the town.





REVIEWS

MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Giles

TARALINGA LILA

by Sangeet, Tarshito, Jimmy

Producer: Tarshito for Kittani Music, NSW, Australia, 1999 (57mins)
Distributor: **Australia**—Kittani Music, tel +61 (0)2 6684 2350, website <http://users.mullum.com.au/tarshito>

One of Australia's unique and refreshing ambient performers, Tarshito has been producing music since 1989 and doing it well. Earlier releases like *One Moment*, *Travellers Tales* and *Dreams of Passion* have been gentle, cross-cultural pieces of ambient, uplifting, fusion music. The latest, *Taralinga Lila*, featuring fellow musos Sangeet and Jimmy, is an exciting mix of West and East, with sitar, cello, percussion, guitar and didgeridu, that sails along in a rhythmic flow of Indian-inspired, percussive dancing sound. A lively, celebratory album.

REPUBLICA DOMINICANA

by various artists

Producer: Dan Storper for Putumayo World Music, NY, USA, 2000 (41mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **USA**—Putumayo Music, tel 1888 788 8629, website www.putumayo.com

Another in the great Putumayo catalogue, this time from the Dominican Republic. The most famous music from the island is the style known as *merengue*. It's an exciting dance rhythm that's found throughout the Caribbean. Usually the music is played by a large ensemble that includes saxophones, trumpets, brass and keyboards, with a bunch of peppy singers who do their stuff with lots of great choreography. The other form is *bachata* which features the bongos and the requinto, a small guitar. This hot collection pushes both styles and will have you up on your feet for every track.

BEYOND SKIN

by Nitin Sawhney

Producer: Nitin Sawhney for Outcaste Records, London, UK, 1999 (58mins)
Distributors: **Aust/NZ**—Festival Records; **UK**—Outcaste Records, website www.outcaste.com

Identified by an extraordinary cover image of a bust of a crying man, *Beyond Skin* is among the best British/Asian experimental fusion pieces of the year. Nitin states: "My identity and my history are defined only by myself—beyond politics, beyond nationality, beyond religion and beyond skin." A mix of upbeat, fused and synthesised sound,

techno, flamenco, jazz, traditional instruments and political statements makes this an exciting exploration of the musical boundaries of the best new Indo-tradition.

TRIBE

by Tribe

Producer: David Pendragon for Pentacles Music, Aust, 1999 (61mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—One World Music, tel (07) 3367 0788; **UK**—One World, tel 01986 781682; **USA**—One World, tel 1800 7710987, website www.new-worldmusic.com

Journeying into a mix of tribal cultures has been the goal of Tribe members David Pendragon, Bill Hall and Wayne Miller. Here they combine mixes from Asia, Africa and the Pacific with their own brand of world tribal music. Bringing together keyboards with dulcimer, flute, accordion, bass and percussion, they have captured the sounds of diverse cultures from around the planet. This is a very listenable album of laid-back world fusion. Recommended.

SHAFQAT ALI KHAN

by Shafqat Ali Khan

Producer: Douglas McKeehan for World Class Music, USA, 2000 (55mins)
Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **USA**—World Class Music, tel (415) 331 3200, website www.world-classmusic.com

The tradition of *gharana*-singing is one that can be traced back centuries in the Indian and Pakistani classical musical lineage. Shafqat Ali Khan's own musical family line goes back to the 16th century. Here he is enhanced by an electrified musical backing with keyboards and guitars plus traditional instruments, the udu, dhumbek, tabla, kanjira and shakers, to produce a more exotic, blended sound. An intriguing album that successfully manages to cross the boundaries between ancient and modern.

